

CHAPTER XXV

SCIMITAR HILL AND HILL 60

(Sketches 29, 30)

FOLLOWING a chilly night, the morning of the 21st was again 21 Aug. oppressively hot. The opposing trenches were nowhere less than 700 yards apart, but from daybreak onwards the Turks were abnormally vigilant, and any movement behind the British lines was met by bursts of fire.

Soon after 1 P.M. the Commander-in-Chief crossed over from Imbros and took up his position on the ridge above corps headquarters to watch the battle.

One of the main reasons for an afternoon attack was to enable the infantry to advance with the sun at their backs. The afternoon sun, it was hoped, would help the attacking artillery and blind the defenders with its glare. But nature herself seemed to fight on the side of the Turks. Soon after midday the sun disappeared into banks of unseasonable cloud, and a veil of haze rose up from the Suvla plain to hide the Turkish positions.

The preliminary bombardment began at half past two, but effected very little. Many of the Turkish gun positions had not been located, the British 5-inch howitzers again proved their inaccuracy, and several of the 60-pdrs. (the only guns that de Lisle could depend on for counter-battery work) developed defects and were soon out of action. The *Swiftsure* fired 180 rounds of all calibres, but most of her 7.5-inch shells were armour-piercing projectiles and of little or no avail. The Turks retaliated heavily on the trenches held by the 29th Division.

According to the original orders for the battle, the 11th Division was to advance at three o'clock, and the 29th Division on the left at half past three. The left flank of the Anzac corps, which was to co-operate by capturing Hill 60, was also to advance at three o'clock, in touch with the 11th Division. During the forenoon of the 21st, however, it was arranged

21 Aug. between Generals de Lisle and Birdwood that, in order to increase the strength of the initial bombardment in front of the IX Corps, some of the Anzac batteries should shell the W Hills and Scimitar Hill before switching on to their own targets, and that the advance of the Anzac infantry should be postponed till half past three.¹ Finally, as this change of plan would entail an unsupported advance by the 11th Division at three o'clock, and as the Turks might thus concentrate all their guns on that part of the line, General de Lisle issued a last-minute order that as soon as the leading battalions of the 11th Division left their trenches, the 86th and 87th Brigades should each send forward one company to take up a position about 500 yards in front of the British line. This order reached the 29th Division just in time to be acted on.

Sketch 29. Opposite the 11th Division front a Turkish trench ran north from Azmak Dere to Hetman Chair,² and a communication trench led east from that point to another trench at the foot of the W Hills. These trenches formed the first objective for the division. On the right, two battalions of the 34th Brigade were to capture and hold the southern half of the forward line, and then to send out fighting patrols to establish touch with the Anzac left flank on the southern side of Azmak Dere. Two battalions of the 32nd Brigade were to capture the northern half of the forward trench, the communication trench and the trench at the foot of the W Hills. This northern half was not parallel to the 32nd Brigade's front line, and, owing to intervening hedges and scrub, was not visible from it. In order to attack it in line the troops would have to execute a left wheel after leaving their departure trench, and arrangements had been made for the directing flank (6/Yorkshire) to march on a compass bearing. The advance was to be supported by covering fire from 22 machine guns³ massed on Chocolate Hill.

As soon as the first objective had been carried the remaining two battalions of the 32nd Brigade, supported by the 33rd Brigade, were to press forward and capture the W Hills.

Very unfortunately the preliminary bombardment failed to touch the Turkish forward trench, and its garrison was unshaken when the British advance began. On the right the

¹ The assaulting battalions of the 11th Division were unaware of this change of programme when their attack began.

² Hetman Chair (English: Hetman's field) was seamed with irrigation ditches, some of them 3 feet deep.

³ These guns had been hurriedly collected partly from the 11th Division and the 2nd Mounted Division, and partly from the Armoured Car Detachment (R.N.A.C.D.) belonging to the Royal Naval Division. There had been little time to organize their fire.

5/Dorset and the 9/Lancashire Fusiliers of the 34th Brigade 21 Aug. reached their objective, but not without heavy casualties, the Fusiliers losing five of their seven officers. Few of the Turkish garrison waited to meet the assault, but a hot fire was opened from the southern side of Azmak Dere when the troops began to consolidate the new line. Fighting patrols were sent across to gain touch with the Gurkhas; but the Anzac advance had not yet started, and the patrols were forced to retire. The Turks continued to be aggressive on this flank, and during the afternoon the greater part of the 34th Brigade had to be sent forward to assist in holding the position.

On the left of the 34th, the 6/Yorkshire and the 6/York & Lancaster of the 32nd Brigade were met by a terrific fire. The 6/Yorkshire soon had no officers left, and partly owing to the loss of the directing guides, partly to a number of transverse hedges, the advancing line swung too far to the left. This movement affected the York & Lancaster, and both battalions were soon heading to the north of their objective. Here they came under heavy enfilade fire from the communication trench on their right flank, and from a small redoubt where that trench joined the forward line. Many casualties resulted, and the advance fell to pieces with nothing done.

After the failure of the leading battalions, the 8/West Riding and the 9/West Yorkshire were hurried forward to capture the first objective, but they too swung left-handed. Finding themselves to the north of Hetman Chair, they tried to assault the communication trench from that direction. But this trench now turned out to be a heavily loop-holed fire trench. The enemy's resistance could not be overcome; and the troops fell back towards the southern slopes of Green Hill.

The 33rd Brigade, which was to support the 32nd, started from Lala Baba soon after three o'clock. Moving round the southern edge of the Salt Lake in open formation the brigade was heavily shelled, and in order to avoid this fire the two rear battalions veered off to the south, where most of them joined up with the 34th Brigade. The leading battalion—the 9/Sherwood Foresters—headed straight for the small work at the northern end of the Turkish trench at Hetman Chair, and, endeavouring to storm it alone, was repulsed with heavy loss; its commanding officer (Lieut.-Colonel L. A. Bosanquet) and second-in-command were killed. Pushing further forward on the left, two companies of the 6/Border Regiment were in turn caught by very heavy fire from the communication trench, and after suffering heavy casualties, including their colonel (Lieut.-Colonel G. F. Broadrick) killed, fell back in some confusion.

21 Aug. Thus, by five o'clock, the 11th Division's attack had, for the most part, failed. But Br.-General Maxwell, commanding the 33rd Brigade, was rallying such men as he could find to hold the original front line of the 32nd Brigade, and after dark this officer made several unsuccessful attempts to capture the Turkish work at Hetman Chair.¹

With the 29th Division, meanwhile, things had gone very little better than on General Hammersley's front. The task of the 86th Brigade had been to capture 112 Metre Hill, a well-marked feature at the end of the Anafarta spur, a little to the north of the W Hills. This hill, which lay about 1,500 yards to the east of the British line, was strongly entrenched, while in front of it, about a thousand yards from the British line, was the Turkish front line trench. The wide stretch of No Man's Land was rough and stony and studded with patches of scrub. The 1/R. Munster Fusiliers was to lead the attack, supported by the 1/Lancashire Fusiliers. The 2/Royal Fusiliers was to follow in reserve, and the Dublin Fusiliers to remain behind in the British front line.

Throughout the preliminary bombardment the 86th Brigade was exposed to considerable shell fire and suffered a number of casualties.

Soon after three o'clock the leading company of the Munsters pushed forward from the right of the brigade front. By this time the patches of scrub in front of Green Hill had been set alight by the Turkish counter-bombardment and were beginning to burn fiercely. Fortunately the fire and smoke helped to conceal movement, and a thin line was established about midway between the opposing trenches.

Punctually at 3.30 P.M. two more companies of the Munsters began to move forward. But they were caught by enfilade machine-gun fire from the same Turkish trench at Hetman Chair; the blazing scrub split up their advance; and though small parties continued to struggle forward, casualties were so severe that only a handful of men succeeded in joining the leading company.

Ten minutes after zero hour the fourth company of the Munsters began to follow in support. But casualties were so severe that within five minutes the advance came to a standstill, and the 1/Lancashire Fusiliers, following shortly afterwards, was able to do no more. By half past four no portion of the 86th Brigade had got within 500 yards of the Turkish front line trench.

¹ Another gallant but abortive attempt to capture this work was made just before dark by a mixed party of men belonging to the 32nd and 33rd Brigades, led by Capt. Sherwood Kelly.

The attack by the 87th Brigade began with greater promise. 21 Aug. The task of that brigade was to capture Scimitar Hill. This was the position which the 6/East Yorkshire had reached on the 8th August, and from which it had been so fatally recalled to Sulajik the following night. Its summit was a crescent-shaped plateau, about 400 yards long, with the ends of the crescent pointing to the British line. At the northern end was a small mound which dominated the rest of the plateau. The whole plateau could, moreover, be swept by fire, at effective ranges, from the neighbourhood of 112 Metre Hill.

The attack on this formidable position was to be carried out by the 1/R. Inniskilling Fusiliers. The 1/Border Regiment was to follow in close support, and as soon as the hill had been taken, and the leading troops of the 86th Brigade had been seen on Hill 112, the 2/South Wales Borderers was to push forward to seize the intervening slopes. The 1/King's Own Scottish Borderers was to remain in the old British front line.

At 3.5 P.M., under cover of massed machine-gun fire, one company of the Inniskillings crept out from the Borderers' trenches to form a thin firing line at the foot of Scimitar Hill. This it succeeded in doing with scarcely a casualty, and half an hour later the whole battalion advanced to assault the crest. The Irish troops surged forward with great dash, and in a very few moments, despite a most destructive enfilade fire, the crest of the hill was captured. But scarcely had this been done when the captured line was raked by shrapnel and machine-gun bullets from the Turkish position on the Anafarta spur. Enormous casualties were inflicted; the British line broke; and the troops came pouring back. Many of them were rallied half-way down the hill, and from here an attempt was made to attack again.

The Border Regiment now swept forward—the Inniskillings with them—and once again that fatal hill was breasted. But only on the southern side of its crescent could any progress be made. By five o'clock the attack had died away. The western slopes of the hill were strewn with dead, and very few of the attacking officers were left.

At this moment a corps order reached General Marshall, commanding the 29th Division, that the 2nd Mounted Division would push through and take the objectives assigned to the 29th. Marshall thereupon ordered his attacking brigades to stand fast, and to renew the attack when the Mounted Division arrived.¹

¹ General de Lisle's order was issued at 4 P.M. At that hour the information at his disposal was that Hetman Chair had been taken by the

21 Aug. The 2nd Mounted Division had been concentrated overnight in rear of Lala Baba. Its orders were to remain there till the infantry advance began, and then to move forward to Chocolate Hill. Its task in the battle, as explained to the divisional commander overnight, had seemed comparatively easy. From Chocolate Hill it was to be ready to push through to the line Hill 101—Abrikja as soon as the 29th Division had broken the back of the defence by capturing the main positions on Hill 112 and Scimitar Hill.

This was the Yeomanry division's first experience of active operations, and all ranks were cheerfully excited that afternoon as they sat on the beach behind Lala Baba, watching the warships shooting, and waiting for the order to move.

Soon after half past three all five brigades moved off from their bivouacs in succession. Each brigade was nearly a thousand strong, and as soon as this large body of men reached the open plain to the south of the Salt Lake, it offered an inviting target to the enemy's guns.¹ But the successive lines swept forward as steadily as if on parade, only moving at the double when ordered to do so, and by five o'clock the whole division had arrived at Chocolate Hill. Fortunately the Turkish shrapnel had burst so high that, except in the case of one or two regiments, casualties had not been heavy. But the Warwickshire Yeomanry (Lieut.-Colonel T. A. Wight-Boycott) lost one officer and 60 men out of 300, and the Gloucestershire Hussars lost 61 officers and men, including their commanding officer (Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Playne) badly wounded.

At Chocolate Hill orders awaited the division for a far more formidable task than that originally anticipated. The 29th Division had failed to reach its objectives, and the Yeomanry were to try where Regular troops had failed.

A hurried explanation was given to the brigadiers, and in half an hour the troops were again on the move. On the left, to the north of Chocolate Hill, the 2nd (South Midland) Brigade, under Br.-General Lord Longford, was heading for the front-line trench of the 87th Brigade, *en route* for Scimitar Hill. On the right, the 4th (London) Brigade, under Br.-General

11th Division, but that the 86th Brigade was held up, and that the 87th, after taking Scimitar Hill, had been driven back from the summit. He judged that if he could take Scimitar Hill—Hill 112, this would assist the 11th Division to capture the W Hills. His order ran, "Provided second line 29th Division has gone forward, push Mounted Division forward in three lines to take top of Hill 112 to Scimitar Hill".

¹ Regiments followed each other at 100 yards' distance in column of squadrons, each squadron in line of troop columns at 20 yards' interval and distance. Subsequently the intervals were increased to 100 yards.

A. H. M. Taylor, followed by the 1st (South Midland) Brigade, 21 Aug. under Br.-General E. A. Wiggin, was moving towards Green Hill to pass through the 86th Brigade and capture Hill 112. The 3rd (Notts & Derby) Brigade, temporarily commanded by Lieut.-Colonel E. H. Cole,¹ was in support, and Br.-General J. D. T. Tyndale-Biscoe's 5th Brigade in reserve.

Examining these dispositions, it cannot fail to be noticed that the chance of success was small, for with one part of the division moving to the north of Chocolate Hill and another part to the south of it, a co-ordinated attack was practically out of the question. But this was not the main disadvantage under which the Yeomanry were labouring as they stumbled blindly forward into battle. Brigadiers had been given little time to explain even what they knew themselves of the tasks that lay in front of them, and in two cases even the brigadiers had not realized what they were meant to do. No one in the division had any idea of the situation in front, of what had befallen the 29th Division, or of where and when the Turks would first be encountered. Only a few of the senior officers, and none of the juniors, had ever seen the ground. The mist was growing thicker, scrub fires were raging, and pillars of smoke were blotting out the view. Streams of wounded were struggling back to cover. The din of battle was deafening; and daylight would only last another hour.

It was about six o'clock when the 2nd (South Midland) Brigade reached the old British front line on the extreme left of the 87th Brigade. The South Wales Borderers moved up on the right, and the new advance on Scimitar Hill began. The haze was now so thick that the outline of the hill could barely be distinguished. Helped by this haze, the South Wales Borderers at first made good progress, but on nearing the summit of the southern end of the hill they were checked by overwhelming fire, principally from the right flank; and all their officers and all four company sergeant-majors were hit.² Further progress was impossible; but a line was subsequently organized about half-way up the hill, and this line was held.

On the left, meanwhile, the Yeomanry, led by Lord Longford in person, attempted to storm the northern and central slopes. Here the Turkish fire was not so deadly, and for the second time that day the top of the hill was won. But the success was short lived. The troops on the crest were driven back by

¹ Br.-General P. Kenna, V.C., was commanding the division.

² As no simultaneous attack was being made on Hill 112 and the W Hills, the Turkish garrison of these points could concentrate all their attention on the S.W.B.

21 Aug. enfilade fire, and one detachment, which had pushed on ahead, was surrounded and overwhelmed. Lord Longford and his brigade-major were missing after the action, and their bodies were never recovered.

After dusk the enemy's fire slackened, and strenuous efforts were made by the surviving Yeomanry officers to get their men together and dig a line on the western slopes of the hill, on the left of the South Wales Borderers. But in the darkness and confusion this was no easy matter. Very few officers were left, and units were intermixed. "Suddenly", writes an officer of the Bucks Hussars, "there was a loud shout of 'retire' from the left, and the whole line swept back, much too quickly, and for no real reason except the best of all reasons, that the men were tried beyond all endurance and did not know what else to do." A little lower down, however, the men were again rallied, and a ragged line was formed on the lower slopes.

Meanwhile on the front of the 86th Brigade the situation had gone from bad to worse. Hearing at 5.20 P.M. that "the Mounted Division is being pushed forward in three lines to take the top of Hill 112",¹ the brigadier ordered his reserve battalion, the 2/Royal Fusiliers, to move forward with the Yeomanry as soon as the latter arrived. But at 6.30 P.M. there was no sign of the mounted brigades, and at 7.30 P.M. they still had not arrived. The Royal Fusiliers could not get forward alone; and as darkness had now set in, and the scattered positions gained by the Royal Munster Fusiliers and the Lancashire Fusiliers were valueless and insecure, Colonel Perceval ordered the remnants of both these battalions² to withdraw behind Green Hill.

The 4th and 1st Brigades of the Yeomanry, which were to have pushed through to attack Hill 112, had meanwhile accomplished nothing. Neither of the brigadiers concerned appears to have grasped exactly what was required of him, and the greater part of both brigades was eventually halted just south of Green Hill to await further orders. But many small and disconnected detachments, losing touch with their units as they advanced across that scrub-covered hillside, had pushed straight ahead, and some of these eventually gained touch with the South Wales Borderers on the slopes of Scimitar Hill. Others headed south-east towards Hetman Chair, where they suffered heavy casualties from the Turkish strong-point.

Soon after midnight an attempt was made by Br.-General

¹ Message from 29th Division headquarters.

² Each battalion had lost nearly all its officers and more than half its rank and file.

Kenna to clear the Turks from the Hetman Chair locality, a 21 Aug. portion of the 3rd (Notts & Derby) Brigade being entrusted with this task. But no one knew where the Turkish position lay. Sir John Milbanke, V.C., the colonel of the Sherwood Rangers, was summoned to brigade headquarters to receive his orders. On his return he could only tell his officers that "we are to take a redoubt, but I don't know where it is and " don't think anyone else knows either, but in any case we are " to go ahead and attack any Turks we meet".

The column went ahead. Milbanke was killed at the head of his men, and the brigadier, Lieut.-Colonel Cole, was wounded.

Thus, by 9 P.M., the attack of the Yeomanry division had accomplished nothing, and all along the IX Corps battle-front the only ground gained throughout the day was, on the left, a very insecure position on the western slopes of Scimitar Hill, and, on the extreme right, a small portion of Turkish front-line trench to the north of Azmak Dere. South of Azmak Dere, as will be shown at the end of this chapter, the attack by General Cox to capture Hill 60 had also failed with heavy loss.

It was not until after midnight that the complete failure of the day was realized at IX Corps headquarters. At 7 P.M., when Sir Ian Hamilton left Suvla for Imbros, it still seemed possible that a certain amount of progress had been made on Scimitar Hill, and the Commander-in-Chief had impressed upon de Lisle that these gains must be held at all costs. This order was repeated to Marshall, and a little later, on receipt of a vague report from the brigadier of the 1st (South Midland) Brigade to the effect that "some of his troops were said to have " reached the W Hills, but that the news was not confirmed", urgent orders were issued by the corps for a fresh attack to be made before daylight on Hill 112 by the 29th Division.

About midnight General Marshall learnt that there was no truth in the reported capture of the W Hills. He also learnt, from officers who had been sent out to reconnoitre, that the line occupied on the slopes of Scimitar Hill was worthless; and that even if the crest of the hill (now vacated by the Turks) were seized before dawn, the troops would certainly be driven off it by enfilade fire as soon as daylight came. Scimitar Hill, indeed, was untenable till Hill 112 was captured, and an attack on Hill 112 could not be made without a simultaneous attack on the W Hills. Explaining this to the IX Corps by telephone, General Marshall urged that the only sound course was to admit that the attack had failed, to spend the rest of the night in saving the wounded who were lying out in front, and to

21/22 Aug. withdraw the troops from Scimitar Hill to the old British front line before daylight. General de Lisle decided that the 11th Division must continue to hold the captured trench north of Azmak Dere, but as regards the 29th Division and the mounted brigades, General Marshall was given a free hand to do as he thought best.

General Marshall acted with characteristic promptitude. He ordered Br.-General Kenna to recall the Yeomanry and march them back to Lala Baba; and large carrying-parties were hurried forward to bring in the wounded and to collect rifles and equipment. Covered by the advanced line on Scimitar Hill this work was continued without interruption from the enemy, and just before daylight the advanced troops were withdrawn to the old British front line.

So ended the action of Scimitar Hill—at once the most costly, in proportion to its size, and the least successful of all the Gallipoli battles. Only on the extreme right had any ground been gained, and even that small gain was recaptured by the Turks on the morning of the 22nd. The losses of the IX Corps amounted to 5,300 killed, wounded and missing, out of 14,300 men who had taken part in the attack.

The British troops had fought with distinguished bravery,¹ but their task had proved impracticable. With numbers little greater than those of the defenders an attempt had been made to capture by frontal attack a position of great natural strength, manned by a determined and victorious enemy. The Turks were amply provided with artillery, and their now formidable trenches were well protected by flanking machine-gun fire.

German and Turkish accounts of the battle do not agree. German writers describe it as a desperately contested action in which the Turks were hard put to it to maintain their ground. Liman von Sanders speaks of "severe and bloody fighting", in which the Anafarta garrison had to use its last reserves, including cavalry.² The German official account³ asserts that "murderous hand-to-hand fighting" continued far into the

¹ Countless gallant deeds, never reported to headquarters, have faded into oblivion. But as a tribute to all the brave men, known and unknown, who especially distinguished themselves this day, the story may here be quoted of Private F. W. O. Potts of the Berkshire Yeomanry. Severely wounded in the attack on Scimitar Hill, Potts remained out on the hill for 48 hours rather than desert a wounded comrade who was unable to move, and whom he himself was too weak to carry. Eventually, using a shovel as an improvised sledge, and fired at by the Turks all the way, he dragged his friend to safety. For this act of courage he was awarded the V.C.

² "Fünf Jahre Türkei", p. 117. One regiment (250 men) of dismounted cavalry had formed part of the garrison of the W Hills since the evening of the 7th August.

³ "Der Kampf um die Dardanellen", p. 154.

night, and that the Turks had their last man in the firing line before the action ceased.

No such lurid details are to be found in Turkish reports, which do not err, as a rule, on the side of understatement. But the Turkish official account admits that some of the trenches on Scimitar Hill were lost and retaken twice, and it places the total casualties for the day at 2,600. As to reinforcements, a Turkish staff officer reports that six battalions of the *9th Division* from Turshun Keui had been brought up behind Hill 112 by 5.30 P.M., but that the *6th Division* from Selvili, which reached Anafarta Sagir half an hour later, took no part in the action.¹ Colonel Saleh-ed-din, who commanded the *12th Division* opposite the IX Corps front of attack, states that his forward troops repelled every assault "till the evening", when he had to relieve three battalions with three battalions from reserve.

THE FIGHT FOR HILL 60

Though the operations undertaken at Anzac on the 21st 21 Aug. August were mainly intended to assist the IX Corps in its Sketch fight for the W Hills, the local objectives aimed at were of 30. distinct tactical importance. General Birdwood's intention was to swing his left flank forward to Susak Kuyu and the summit of Hill 60. Such a line, it was hoped, would strengthen the point of junction between the two corps in the Azmak valley, safeguard the through route along the coast from Anzac to Suvla, and open up a view of the broad valley between the two Anafarta villages. Further, the Anzac left flank would gain the use of two wells at Kabak Kuyu.

No aeroplane photographs of the Hill 60 defences were available, and the sides and crest of that low flat-topped mound were so densely covered with scrub that the general lie of its trenches could not be properly seen from any part of the British line. But an idea persisted that the Turkish defences on the hill consisted of a girdle of trenches on its summit, and that the capture of this work would ensure the possession of the whole hill and of a commanding view to the north.

This belief was incorrect. The Turkish defences did, in

¹ This is corroborated by the following message sent to General de Lisle by G.H.Q. at 6.5 P.M. on the day of the battle: "Aeroplane reports large Turkish reinforcements near Turshun Keui 5.20 P.M. Village Turshun Keui and road east of it blocked with troops and transport. One brigade of infantry advancing from Ak Bashi Liman." Anzac also reported to de Lisle, "A column of about 1,500 Turks was seen by an artillery observation officer at 6.54 P.M. moving in column of route from Anafarta Sagir towards the W Hills."

21 Aug. fact, consist of an enclosed work. But this work was not on the top but on the forward slope of the hill, and was connected with the Azma ravine by communication trenches which ran across some higher ground in rear. To obtain a view to the north it was essential to capture not only the work but also the southern end of the communication trenches beyond it.

Unhappily this fact was not realized till too late. After incessant fighting, and the loss of 2,500 casualties, the enclosed work on Hill 60 was captured, and most of the objectives aimed at were attained. But the Turks had meanwhile converted their communication trenches into an even stronger work on the northern half of the hill. From this position they were never ejected, and the expected view to the north was never attained.

On the 21st August General Birdwood's corps was still suffering from its heavy losses in the four days' battle of Sari Bair. Its casualties during those four days had amounted to 12,500 men out of a total of 37,000, or rather more than 33 per cent of the whole force at Anzac. Of these casualties no less than 5,500 had been suffered by the 13th (New Army) Division. The 1st Australian Division and the New Zealand and Australian Division had lost 5,800 between them; and a total of 1,200 had been lost by the Indian brigade and the 29th Brigade of the 10th Division.

Sickness and disease had further decreased General Birdwood's numbers since the end of the big battle, and the total strength of his corps on the 21st August amounted to little more than 23,000 rifles. Of these, 10,000 were holding the old Anzac position, and 13,000 under General Godley were on the new front from No. 1 Post to Kazlar Chair. Godley's front was divided into two sections, the southern commanded by General Shaw and the northern by General Cox. His reserve, in a gully behind Walker's Ridge, consisted of the 5th Australian Brigade, a splendid body of new troops which had just arrived at Anzac. This brigade, which formed part of the new 2nd Australian Division, had been undergoing intensive training in Egypt; but the men were as yet quite inexperienced, and it was hoped to accustom them gradually to active service conditions before sending them into battle.

Cox's force, which was to carry out the attack on Hill 60, had been strengthened by some units from General Shaw's section, and consisted of his own 29th Indian Brigade, the 4th Australian Brigade, two regiments of New Zealand Mounted Rifles, the 5/Connaught Rangers and the 10/Hampshire of the 29th Brigade (10th Division) and the 4/South Wales Borderers

of the 40th Brigade. All these units, with the exception of 21 Aug. the Connaught Rangers, over 650 strong, were very weak in numbers. The 10/Hampshire could only muster five officers and 330 men, the 4th Australian Brigade only 1,400 all told. The two mounted rifles regiments (Canterbury and Otago) numbered 200 rifles each. Few of the troops had had any respite from front-line conditions for the last fortnight.

Cox's plan was as follows: the 2/10th and the 1/5th Gurkhas were to advance from Kazlar Chair across the open plain to Susak Kuyu and to establish a line with its left in touch with the 11th Division and its right in touch with Hill 60. The 5/Connaught Rangers, under Lieut.-Colonel H. F. N. Jourdain, was to seize the wells at Kabak Kuyu and subsequently to be ready to help in the attack on Hill 60. The enclosed work on Hill 60 was to be assaulted from the south by the two New Zealand regiments under Br.-General Russell. Further to the east, and also under General Russell's command, 500 Australians, supported by the 10/Hampshire, were to seize a Turkish trench on the Hill 60 spur, and to link up their right with the existing line on Damakjelik Spur.

One of the main difficulties to be faced by the attacking troops, especially by those on the right flank, was that the narrow Kaiajik Dere was enfiladed throughout its length from Hill 100. The Turkish trenches on this hill were to be specially bombarded before the attack began.

It was originally arranged that the infantry advance should begin at three o'clock, following a 45 minutes' bombardment. But this plan was changed on the morning of the attack, to enable a portion of the Anzac guns to assist first in bombarding the W Hills. According to the new plan the Anzac objectives were to be given only 30 minutes' bombardment and the Anzac assault was to begin at half past three. This change was unfortunate. It was not only of little help to the IX Corps. It enabled the Turks south of Azmak Dere to inflict heavy casualties on the 34th Brigade, and it resulted in a very ineffectual bombardment of Hill 60 and also of Hill 100.

When, therefore, the infantry began to move forward at half past three they were met by a storm of fire. On the extreme right the leading wave of Australians suffered so heavily that very few reached the shelter of the scrub on the opposite side of the valley. Out of the 150 men of the 13th Battalion who formed this wave no less than 110 were killed or wounded in that short charge, and more were hit soon afterwards. The second wave, formed by the 14th Battalion, shared a similar fate; the third could make no progress at all. The scrub on the

21 Aug. near side of the valley was set on fire by the enemy's shells; the clothes of the wounded caught alight; their ammunition and bombs began to explode; and many wounded were burnt before help could reach them.¹

Next on the left the New Zealand mounted riflemen were slightly more fortunate. But they too suffered heavy losses in their dash across the valley. Here a small portion of the nearest Turkish trench on the southern slope of the hill was captured and held. But the few troops who gained this foothold were isolated, and further progress was impossible. The 10/Hampshire, ordered up from reserve, was similarly brought to a halt by the Turkish barrage, and only one man of the battalion succeeded in reinforcing the leading troops.

On the left of the New Zealanders the 5/Connaught Rangers opened its attack with great promise, and the small Turkish post at Kabak Kuyu was captured with very little trouble. Pressing impetuously forward from that point, however, the Rangers in turn were met by a withering fire. A portion of one company, swinging left-handed, reached the wells at Susak Kuyu, which were found to be unoccupied. Of the remainder, nearly all the leading line were killed or wounded; but two companies of the battalion, after suffering heavy losses, succeeded in reaching the Turkish trench on the north-western side of Hill 60. Here they held out till evening, when, on the arrival of the 15th Gurkhas, the wells at Susak Kuyu and a portion of the line on Hill 60 were handed over to that battalion. The Connaught Rangers were then placed in position between the right of the Gurkhas and the left of the New Zealanders.

In the plain on the extreme left the two battalions of Gurkhas, badly handicapped by the previous loss of most of their British officers, had made very slow progress. Late in the afternoon they were reinforced by the 16th Gurkhas, and it was after this that they linked up with the Connaught Rangers. But touch with the IX Corps on the northern side of Azmak Dere was not established.

At nightfall, therefore, the situation on the Anzac battle front was little better than that of the IX Corps. Despite magnificent gallantry on the part of the assaulting troops the day's plan had failed. Very heavy casualties had been suffered; and all that had been gained, apart from the capture of the wells, was a precarious foothold on the slopes of Hill 60.

¹ Rev. A. Gillison (Presbyterian chaplain) and Corporal R. G. Pittendrigh (a stretcher-bearer who had been a Methodist clergyman prior to enlistment) went out to pull helpless men from the flames. In attempting similar rescue work next morning both these brave men were mortally wounded.

After dusk the Australian detachment on the slopes to the right of Hill 60 was reinforced, and a communication trench was begun across Kaiajik Dere. The 10/Hampshire—now less than 200 strong—was sent round to establish more firmly the line of the Indian brigade between Hill 60 and Susak Kuyu. But the retention of this line apparently depended upon the ability of General Russell's troops to complete the capture of the hill.

After a personal inspection, General Russell decided that there was little chance of the tired New Zealanders being able to make further headway, and that if the enemy's work on Hill 60 was to be taken before daybreak, it must be done by fresh troops. A convenient starting-point for such an attack seemed to be afforded by a sunken road which ran north from Kabak Kuyu. The troops would assault the work from left to right across the front of the New Zealanders.

Such an attack naturally offered great difficulties, for the design of the enemy's trenches was very imperfectly known, and there would be no time for reconnaissance. Nevertheless, Russell unfolded this desperate plan to General Cox. The attack, he suggested, might be carried out by one of the newly arrived battalions of the 5th Australian Brigade. Cox supported the plan, and just before midnight an urgent message was sent to General Godley, asking for a new battalion to carry it out.

General Godley was still averse to employing any portion of his highly prized reinforcement in the present action. But on receipt of Cox's appeal, he reluctantly gave way. The 18th Australian Battalion was ordered to march at once to Dâmakjelic Bair.

This battalion began to arrive about an hour before dawn at the small gully from which the Connaught Rangers had attacked the day before. Here the men were ordered to lie down; and the officers, summoned to a conference with the brigade major, were told for the first time that their battalion was to make an attack. "By the light of a candle, he [the brigade-major] then read them the order for the operation, and explained that they were to assault with bomb and bayonet only. Lieut.-Colonel Chapman interjected that they had no bombs. The brigade-major could only reply that they must do the best that was possible without them."¹

Dawn was already breaking when the battalion was led forward to its assembly positions. The general impression amongst the men was still that they were being taken "to man the trenches"

¹ Australian Official Account, ii. p. 740.

22 Aug. Arrived at the further end of the sunken road to the north of Kabak Kuyu, the two leading companies were halted behind a rough hedge, and the brigade-major now pointed out a low scrub-covered rise about 400 yards to the eastward. This was explained to be Hill 60. One company was to capture the summit, and the others to follow in close support. The order to fix bayonets, charge magazines, and extend into two lines was the first intimation to the troops that they were to carry out an assault. A few minutes later, in broad daylight, the attack began.

The leading company went forward with great dash, and a few minutes later, from General Russell's observation post, parties of Turks were seen vacating their trenches. It seemed that with vigorous support the position could now be won, but support was not forthcoming.

Seeing the opportunity passing, General Russell sent his brigade-major to the battalion, but to no purpose. Inexperience, and the indecision which it breeds, had both played their part. The chance had gone, and when the brigadier himself reached the battalion shortly afterwards, it was evidently useless to renew the attempt. The low flat summit of Hill 60 was still unconquered, and the total casualties of Cox's small force now amounted to over thirteen hundred.

Meanwhile, during the night, a second communication trench had been dug by the Connaught Rangers across Kaiajik Dere to the left flank of the New Zealanders, and, despite continuous bombing attacks by the enemy, the position of these forward troops and of the Australians on their right was now reasonably secure. Out in the plain, however, no touch had been obtained with the IX Corps, but information now reached General Godley's headquarters that the IX Corps attack on the W Hills and Scimitar Hill had definitely failed, and that even on the extreme right the 11th Division had been driven back that morning to the neighbourhood of Kazlar Chair.

23 Aug. On the Suvla front the 23rd August had passed quietly; the Turks were well content to remain on their commanding ground, and were spending their time in digging. At Anzac, on the other hand, though there was no immediate object in further offensive action to assist the IX Corps, the point of junction in the plain could not be looked upon as safe while the Turks remained in their redoubt on Hill 60. The Turkish garrison of that point was nightly at work on the construction of new trenches, but General Cox still hoped to capture the hill by

26 Aug. assault. On the 26th August General Birdwood asked for Sir Ian Hamilton's consent to the operation. The position, he

said, was very strongly held; but he was confident of success, 26 Aug. and, if the Commander-in-Chief agreed, he would ask the IX Corps and the navy to assist with covering fire. Sir Ian Hamilton agreed, but Birdwood was significantly ordered to be "sparing of 5-inch shell, which is very scarce".

It was calculated that a force of one thousand physically fit men would suffice for the operation, but every unit under Cox's command was by this time so reduced by battle casualties and disease that, in order to reach this total, troops had to be taken from no less than nine different battalions.

The attack took place on the afternoon of the 27th, and was 27 Aug. carried out by 350 Australians on the right, 400 New Zealanders and Australians in the centre, and 250 of the 5/Connaught Rangers on the left. Determined opposition was met with, but after very severe fighting¹ a firm position was obtained on the southern slopes of the hill and on the spur immediately to its right. But the upper half of the enclosed work still defied capture, and a reinforcement of the 9th Light Horse, pushed into the attack that night, was able to make little progress.

During the 28th the attacking troops clung to and improved 28 Aug. the trenches already taken; the 10th Light Horse was sent up as an extra reinforcement; and an hour after midnight the attack was again renewed. Fighting of the most desperate character, in which the men of the 10th Light Horse particularly distinguished themselves,² continued till after daybreak; and this time the persistence of the Australians and New Zealanders was at last rewarded with success. When morning broke, however, a bitter disappointment was in store for the commanders who had launched these attacks. At a cost of an additional 1,100 casualties almost the whole network of trenches which formed the objective for the attack had now been wrested from the Turks, and the position on the left flank towards Susak Kuyu could at last be held securely. But the captured trenches did not encircle the hill. The actual summit—shutting out all view of the northern slopes, and seamed by deep entrenchments—was still in the hands of the enemy.

Many of the officers who took part in these operations expressed the opinion later that one more thrust would have completed the capture of the hill. But the truth seems to have been that the whole corps was now completely spent.

¹ The casualties of the Connaught Rangers amounted to 152 out of 250. The 13th Australian Battalion, out of 4 officers and 96 men, lost 3 and 65.

² 2nd Lieut. H. V. H. Throssell, 10th Light Horse, was awarded the V.C. for conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during this attack and in the subsequent consolidation of the position. Five men of the 10th Light Horse won the Distinguished Conduct Medal on this occasion.

The bitter fighting on Hill 60, still regarded by the Australians and New Zealanders as perhaps their sternest trial in Gallipoli, had added the last straw. None of the units engaged had ever been so depleted as at the moment when the action began, and the men had only been able to carry on by sheer force of will. Their spirit, indeed, was so splendid that the higher commanders, judging from appearances, believed them capable of greater efforts than were humanly possible. Courage, morale, and the excitement of the moment enabled them to fight in flashes; but the prolonged strain at Anzac—the fighting, the heat, the constant debilitating sickness—had made too prodigal a call upon their store of nervous energy, and at the end of August the Anzac corps was temporarily incapable of further offensive effort.